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County Employment and Wages in Pennsylvania – First Quarter 2015

Chester County had second largest decrease in wages among nation's largest counties

Employment rose in 17 of the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania from March 2014 to March 2015, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2014 annual average employment.) Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that Cumberland County's 2.4-percent rate of employment gain was the fastest in Pennsylvania and was ranked 135th among the 342 largest counties nationwide. Lancaster County followed with an increase of 1.9 percent, ranking 165th among the nation's large counties. Butler and Lackawanna Counties recorded the only employment declines among Pennsylvania's large counties, down 0.6 and 0.1 percent, respectively.

Nationally, employment grew 2.1 percent during this 12-month period, as 323 of the 342 large counties nationwide gained jobs. Utah County, Utah, experienced the largest percentage increase in employment, up 6.7 percent over the year. Atlantic County, N.J., had the largest employment decrease with a loss of 4.3 percent.

Among the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania, employment was highest in Allegheny County (675,600) in March 2015. One other county, Philadelphia, had employment above 600,000. Together, Pennsylvania's large counties accounted for 76.7 percent of total employment within the Commonwealth. Nationwide, the 342 largest counties made up 72.3 percent of total U.S. employment.

The average weekly wage in Washington County rose 10.7 percent from the first quarter of 2014 to the first quarter of 2015—the fastest wage increase among Pennsylvania's largest counties and ranked second in wage growth among the large counties nationwide. Allegheny was the only other large county in Pennsylvania to rank in the top 15 nationally for wage growth, placing 12th with a 6.3-percent increase. The remaining wage increases in Pennsylvania's large counties ranged from 3.0 percent in Montgomery to 1.1 percent in Bucks. Two counties—Chester and Cumberland—had wage decreases over the year, while Dauphin County's average weekly wage was unchanged. (See [table 1](#).) Nationally, the average weekly wage rose 2.1 percent over the year to \$1,048 in the first quarter of 2015.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 48 counties in Pennsylvania with employment below 75,000. Forty-six of these smaller counties had weekly wages below the national average. (See [table 2](#).)

Large county wage changes

Five of Pennsylvania's 19 large counties recorded over-the-year wage increases larger than the national advance of 2.1 percent in the first quarter of 2015. Wage growth in all five of these counties ranked in the top third among the 342 large counties nationwide.

Of the 342 largest counties nationwide, 297 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Olmsted, Minn., led the nation in average weekly wage growth with an increase of 11.7 percent from the first quarter of 2014. Washington, Pa., as noted, was second with a gain of 10.7 percent.

Nationwide, 39 large counties recorded decreases in average weekly wages over the year. Snohomish, Wash., had the largest decrease in wages with a decline of 4.8 percent from the first quarter of 2014. Chester, Pa., had the second largest decrease in average weekly wages (-4.0 percent), followed by Williamson, Texas (-3.1 percent); Saginaw, Mich. (-2.4 percent); and Palm Beach, Fla. (-2.0 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

The average weekly wage in one of Pennsylvania's large counties, Montgomery, ranked 24th in the nation while Chester and Washington also ranked in the top 50 nationwide. In addition to these counties, Philadelphia, Delaware, and Allegheny Counties also had wages above the U.S. average of \$1,048.

Five large counties in the Commonwealth had average weekly wages that placed in the bottom fourth of the national ranking—Lackawanna, Erie, Luzerne, Westmoreland, and Lancaster. Wages in these counties were more than 20 percent below the national average for the first quarter of 2015.

Average weekly wages in Pennsylvania's smaller counties

Forty-six of the 48 counties in Pennsylvania with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of \$1,048. The exceptions were Montour and Green Counties with wages of \$1,243 and \$1,111, respectively. Perry reported the lowest weekly wage among the smaller counties as well as the Commonwealth as a whole, averaging \$577 in the first quarter of 2015. (See [table 2](#).)

When all 67 counties in Pennsylvania were considered, 59 had wages below the national average of \$1,048. Eighteen reported wages below \$700, 36 had wages from \$701 to \$900, and 13 had wages above \$900. (See [chart 1](#).) Four of the eight counties that recorded wages above the national average of \$1,048 were concentrated in the Philadelphia metropolitan area, and two were located in the Pittsburgh area.

Additional statistics and other information

QCEW data for states have been included in this release in [table 3](#). For additional information about quarterly employment and wages data, please read the Technical Note or visit the QCEW Web site at www.bls.gov/cew/.

Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2013 edition of this publication is now available and contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2014 version of the national news release.

Technical Note

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from summaries of employment and total pay of workers covered by state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) legislation and provided by State Workforce Agencies (SWAs). The 9.5 million employer reports cover 137.4 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly wage values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels of those covered by UI programs. The result is then divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours

of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/cew/; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

QCEW data are not designed as a time series. QCEW data are simply the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. Establishments can move in or out of a county or industry for a number of reasons—some reflecting economic events, others reflecting administrative changes.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. These potential differences result from the states' continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Federal Relay Service: 1-800-877-8339.

Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2015

| Area | Employment ⁽¹⁾ | | Average Weekly Wage ⁽³⁾ | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|---|---------------------|--|--|---|
| | March 2015 ⁽²⁾ (thousands) | Percent change, March 2014-15 ⁽⁴⁾ | National ranking by percent change ⁽⁵⁾ | Average weekly wage | National ranking by level ⁽⁵⁾ | Percent change, first quarter 2010-11 ⁽⁴⁾ | National ranking by percent change ⁽⁵⁾ |
| United States ⁽⁶⁾ | 137,412.4 | 2.1 | -- | \$1,048 | -- | 2.1 | -- |
| Pennsylvania..... | 5,606.9 | 0.9 | -- | 1,031 | 16 | 2.4 | 16 |
| Allegheny, Pa..... | 675.6 | 0.1 | 320 | 1,200 | 55 | 6.3 | 12 |
| Berks, Pa..... | 167.1 | 1.4 | 214 | 881 | 202 | 1.5 | 195 |
| Bucks, Pa..... | 250.0 | 1.2 | 234 | 930 | 165 | 1.1 | 239 |
| Butler, Pa..... | 83.3 | -0.6 | 335 | 919 | 171 | 1.9 | 150 |
| Chester, Pa..... | 240.1 | 0.6 | 290 | 1,363 | 27 | -4.0 | 341 |
| Cumberland, Pa..... | 127.7 | 2.4 | 135 | 908 | 178 | -0.5 | 314 |
| Dauphin, Pa..... | 173.7 | 0.6 | 290 | 1,036 | 100 | 0.0 | 298 |
| Delaware, Pa..... | 215.4 | 0.8 | 267 | 1,143 | 62 | 1.9 | 150 |
| Erie, Pa..... | 122.6 | 1.0 | 254 | 770 | 306 | 1.4 | 210 |
| Lackawanna, Pa..... | 95.8 | -0.1 | 326 | 752 | 317 | 1.3 | 223 |
| Lancaster, Pa..... | 224.3 | 1.9 | 165 | 818 | 265 | 1.9 | 150 |
| Lehigh, Pa..... | 178.7 | 1.1 | 243 | 1,006 | 120 | 2.9 | 76 |
| Luzerne, Pa..... | 139.9 | 0.8 | 267 | 783 | 297 | 1.4 | 210 |
| Montgomery, Pa..... | 468.0 | 0.8 | 267 | 1,387 | 24 | 3.0 | 67 |
| Northampton, Pa..... | 105.8 | 1.3 | 223 | 882 | 200 | 1.4 | 210 |
| Philadelphia, Pa..... | 646.1 | 1.6 | 199 | 1,214 | 51 | 2.4 | 114 |
| Washington, Pa..... | 86.3 | 1.5 | 210 | 1,219 | 50 | 10.7 | 2 |
| Westmoreland, Pa..... | 129.5 | 0.2 | 314 | 785 | 295 | 1.3 | 223 |
| York, Pa..... | 171.5 | 0.8 | 267 | 854 | 231 | 1.4 | 210 |

Footnotes:

- (1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.
- (2) Data are preliminary.
- (3) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.
- (4) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.
- (5) Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- (6) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.
- (7) Data do not meet BLS or State agency disclosure standards.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all of the counties in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2015

| Area ⁽¹⁾ | Employment March 2015 ⁽²⁾ | Average weekly wage ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾ |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| United States ⁽⁴⁾ | 137,412,381 | \$1,048 |
| Pennsylvania | 5,606,898 | 1,031 |
| Adams | 33,637 | 703 |
| Allegheny | 675,569 | 1,200 |
| Armstrong | 17,003 | 752 |
| Beaver | 51,331 | 823 |
| Bedford | 15,089 | 631 |
| Berks | 167,080 | 881 |
| Blair | 57,434 | 727 |
| Bradford | 24,481 | 845 |
| Bucks | 249,954 | 930 |
| Butler | 83,270 | 919 |
| Cambria | 52,931 | 686 |
| Cameron | 1,980 | 726 |
| Carbon | 16,777 | 633 |
| Centre | 65,412 | 898 |
| Chester | 240,090 | 1,363 |
| Clarion | 13,343 | 636 |
| Clearfield | 29,229 | 694 |
| Clinton | 12,704 | 773 |
| Columbia | 24,593 | 727 |
| Crawford | 30,803 | 694 |
| Cumberland | 127,669 | 908 |
| Dauphin | 173,682 | 1,036 |
| Delaware | 215,359 | 1,143 |
| Elk | 14,762 | 747 |
| Erie | 122,632 | 770 |
| Fayette | 39,279 | 675 |
| Forest | 1,942 | 885 |
| Franklin | 57,392 | 715 |
| Fulton | 4,965 | 798 |
| Greene | 14,893 | 1,111 |
| Huntingdon | 12,003 | 693 |
| Indiana | 31,960 | 842 |
| Jefferson | 15,555 | 708 |
| Juniata | 6,030 | 665 |
| Lackawanna | 95,845 | 752 |
| Lancaster | 224,311 | 818 |
| Lawrence | 28,334 | 736 |
| Lebanon | 47,940 | 730 |
| Lehigh | 178,686 | 1,006 |
| Luzerne | 139,879 | 783 |
| Lycoming | 52,707 | 809 |
| Mc Kean | 15,716 | 783 |
| Mercer | 47,112 | 737 |
| Mifflin | 15,516 | 680 |
| Monroe | 52,396 | 805 |
| Montgomery | 468,007 | 1,387 |
| Montour | 15,270 | 1,243 |
| Northampton | 105,843 | 882 |
| Northumberland | 26,559 | 713 |
| Perry | 7,636 | 577 |
| Philadelphia | 646,118 | 1,214 |
| Pike | 10,182 | 609 |
| Potter | 5,193 | 736 |
| Schuylkill | 49,381 | 721 |

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all of the counties in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2015 - Continued

| Area ⁽¹⁾ | Employment March 2015 ⁽²⁾ | Average weekly wage ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾ |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Snyder | 15,595 | 601 |
| Somerset | 24,105 | 698 |
| Sullivan | 1,762 | 694 |
| Susquehanna | 9,133 | 724 |
| Tioga | 12,729 | 752 |
| Union | 16,637 | 769 |
| Venango | 19,025 | 691 |
| Warren | 14,760 | 698 |
| Washington | 86,320 | 1,219 |
| Wayne | 13,826 | 684 |
| Westmoreland | 129,491 | 785 |
| Wyoming | 9,955 | 891 |
| York | 171,496 | 854 |

Footnotes:

(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

(2) Data are preliminary.

(3) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands. Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, first quarter 2015⁽²⁾

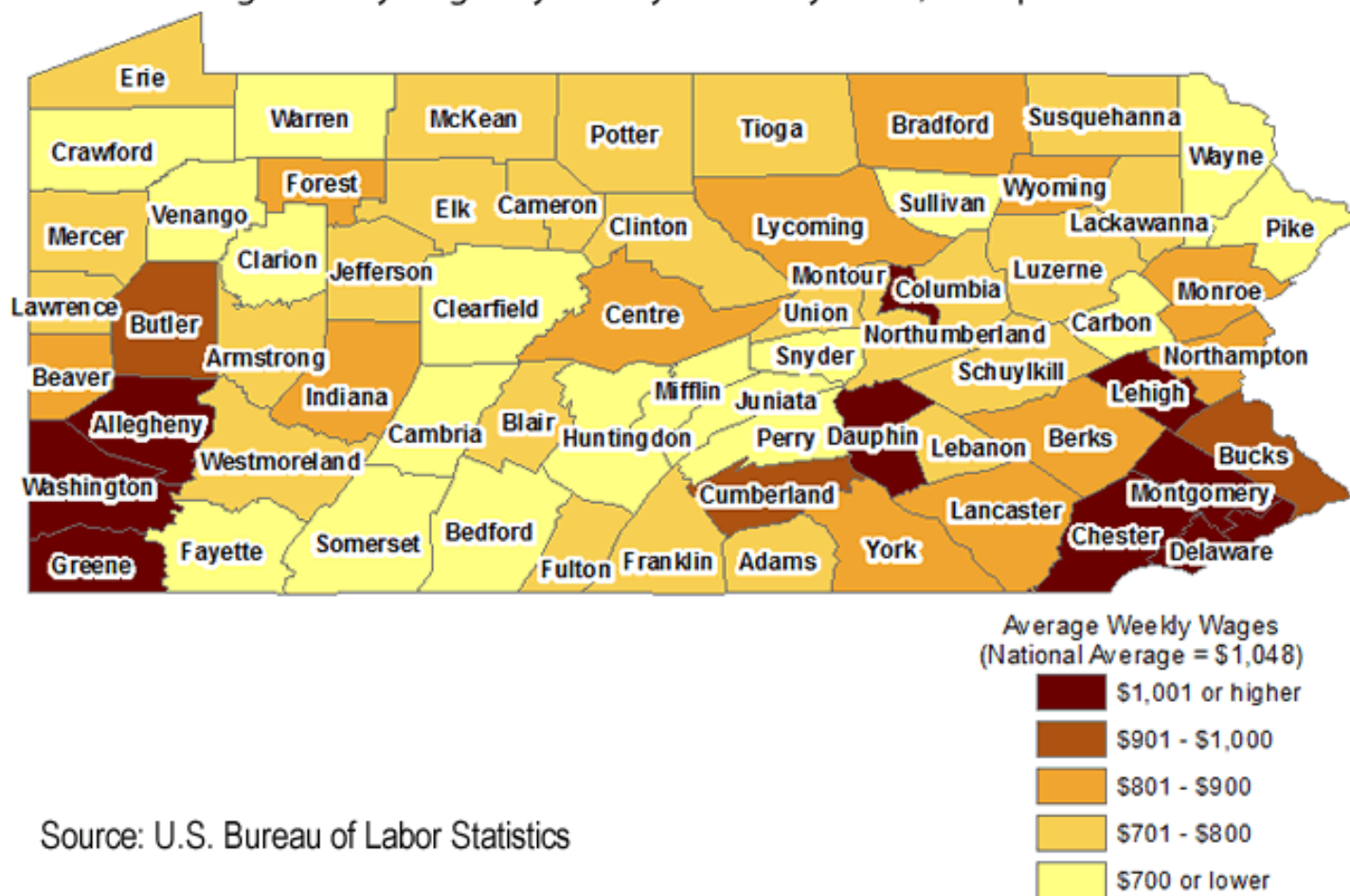
| State | Employment ⁽¹⁾ | | Average weekly wage ⁽³⁾ | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|
| | March 2015 (thousands) | Percent change, March 2014-15 | Average weekly wage | National ranking by level | Percent change, first quarter 2014-15 | National ranking by percent change |
| United States ⁽⁴⁾ | 137,412.4 | 2.1 | \$1,048 | -- | 2.1 | -- |
| Alabama | 1,873.5 | 1.3 | 844 | 39 | 2.2 | 19 |
| Alaska | 322.2 | 1.0 | 1,051 | 15 | 2.6 | 10 |
| Arizona | 2,605.6 | 2.5 | 926 | 23 | 1.0 | 45 |
| Arkansas | 1,166.6 | 1.3 | 790 | 47 | 0.8 | 47 |
| California | 16,029.5 | 3.0 | 1,207 | 6 | 3.7 | 3 |
| Colorado | 2,458.0 | 3.7 | 1,071 | 13 | 2.4 | 16 |
| Connecticut | 1,640.5 | 0.8 | 1,382 | 3 | 1.5 | 35 |
| Delaware | 422.8 | 2.5 | 1,105 | 9 | -0.5 | 51 |
| District of Columbia | 732.6 | 1.4 | 1,764 | 1 | 3.2 | 4 |
| Florida | 8,018.0 | 3.6 | 885 | 28 | 1.8 | 27 |
| Georgia | 4,107.0 | 3.5 | 989 | 18 | 1.7 | 31 |
| Hawaii | 633.7 | 1.3 | 881 | 31 | 2.8 | 9 |
| Idaho | 650.3 | 3.1 | 736 | 50 | 2.2 | 19 |
| Illinois | 5,724.6 | 1.2 | 1,130 | 7 | 2.4 | 16 |
| Indiana | 2,894.8 | 1.8 | 857 | 35 | 1.4 | 38 |
| Iowa | 1,504.3 | 1.3 | 848 | 37 | 2.9 | 7 |
| Kansas | 1,357.1 | 1.0 | 851 | 36 | 1.4 | 38 |
| Kentucky | 1,810.3 | 1.5 | 823 | 41 | 1.5 | 35 |
| Louisiana | 1,927.1 | 1.0 | 885 | 28 | 2.0 | 21 |
| Maine | 571.4 | 0.9 | 793 | 45 | 0.9 | 46 |
| Maryland | 2,540.8 | 1.2 | 1,113 | 8 | 2.5 | 12 |
| Massachusetts | 3,338.6 | 1.7 | 1,341 | 4 | 3.2 | 4 |
| Michigan | 4,079.5 | 1.8 | 969 | 21 | 1.9 | 24 |
| Minnesota | 2,709.2 | 1.8 | 1,079 | 12 | 4.3 | 1 |
| Mississippi | 1,102.3 | 0.6 | 711 | 51 | 0.7 | 48 |
| Missouri | 2,678.0 | 1.7 | 882 | 30 | 1.8 | 27 |
| Montana | 441.0 | 2.7 | 750 | 49 | 2.6 | 10 |
| Nebraska | 943.1 | 1.4 | 818 | 42 | 2.5 | 12 |
| Nevada | 1,227.7 | 3.7 | 865 | 34 | -0.2 | 50 |
| New Hampshire | 623.5 | 1.5 | 982 | 20 | 1.2 | 43 |
| New Jersey | 3,834.6 | 1.4 | 1,288 | 5 | 1.9 | 24 |
| New Mexico | 798.7 | 1.4 | 805 | 43 | 1.5 | 35 |
| New York | 8,865.0 | 1.9 | 1,463 | 2 | 0.2 | 49 |
| North Carolina | 4,099.4 | 2.5 | 930 | 22 | 1.9 | 24 |
| North Dakota | 436.0 | 1.6 | 984 | 19 | 4.2 | 2 |
| Ohio | 5,144.5 | 1.4 | 922 | 24 | 1.4 | 38 |
| Oklahoma | 1,592.7 | 1.3 | 869 | 33 | 2.0 | 21 |
| Oregon | 1,748.7 | 3.5 | 919 | 25 | 2.9 | 7 |
| Pennsylvania | 5,606.9 | 0.9 | 1,031 | 16 | 2.4 | 16 |
| Rhode Island | 456.1 | 1.4 | 1,008 | 17 | 1.2 | 43 |
| South Carolina | 1,919.1 | 2.5 | 801 | 44 | 1.8 | 27 |
| South Dakota | 406.5 | 1.5 | 763 | 48 | 3.0 | 6 |
| Tennessee | 2,772.7 | 2.1 | 886 | 27 | 1.4 | 38 |
| Texas | 11,557.0 | 2.9 | 1,089 | 10 | 2.5 | 12 |
| Utah | 1,318.8 | 3.7 | 845 | 38 | 1.7 | 31 |
| Vermont | 303.9 | 0.9 | 824 | 40 | 2.0 | 21 |
| Virginia | 3,649.3 | 1.1 | 1,068 | 14 | 1.7 | 31 |
| Washington | 3,064.4 | 3.2 | 1,087 | 11 | 1.8 | 27 |
| West Virginia | 692.4 | -0.3 | 792 | 46 | 1.4 | 38 |
| Wisconsin | 2,734.3 | 1.5 | 877 | 32 | 2.5 | 12 |
| Wyoming | 277.8 | 0.8 | 892 | 26 | 1.7 | 31 |
| Puerto Rico | 904.9 | -1.1 | 524 | (3) | 1.0 | (3) |
| Virgin Islands | 38.5 | 0.0 | 738 | (3) | -0.7 | (3) |

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

- (1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. These 328 U.S. counties comprise 71.1 percent of the total workers in the U.S.
- (2) Data are preliminary.
- (3) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.
- (4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.
- (5) Data not included in the national ranking.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics